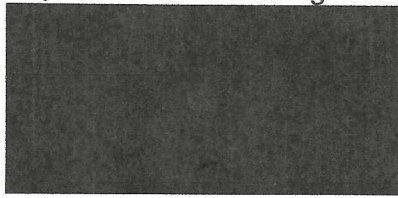


Ryan & Melissa Berding



To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Ryan Berding and I have had the pleasure of knowing Brian Bartels and the Bartels family for the past 14 years. I met the Bartels family when I met my wife, Melissa. Melissa and Shannon have been best friends since childhood. Shannon was the Maid of Honor at our wedding and as a family, we have spent a lot of time together. Their family has welcomed us into their house on several occasions and our children are close to Bartels' children. The Bartels family is the example I would give if someone asked me what a strong and proud Christian family would look like.

Over these years I have spent a lot of time with Brian Bartels and I have never known him to be anything but respectful and courteous. Always a "yes sir" or "no sir" when I spoke with him. He always took the time to listen to what you had to say, asking questions, and engaging in conversations. My step-son, who is about the same age as Brian, would often spend time with Brian and I never once had a second thought about what they were doing because I had full faith in Brian and the Bartels family. My opinion of Brian has always been one of a passionate and intelligent young man.

When I read about what happened and what Brian was being accused of, I was in complete shock. There was never a day where I thought Brian could be involved in something like that and then to see how his family was being treated as well, it was very upsetting. If any of those people took the time to talk to and get to know Brian and the Bartels family they would know how wrong they are.

As someone who made a similar mistake at his age, I was afforded the opportunity to prove to the courts that this one mistake would not define me. I believe if Brian was given the same opportunity that you would never hear his name again. I fully believe that Brian deserves the opportunity to prove to everyone that he is not this person. That he clearly made a mistake and he is a good person. If you give him the opportunity to correct this mistake, I have no doubts he certainly would.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ryan &amp; Melissa Berding".

Ryan & Melissa Berding